

1. (Amended) A method comprising:

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receiving information about a prospective user of an operating system,  
wherein the information includes user preferences for multiple different pieces of  
hardware of the computer; and

developing the operating system image, pre-populated with the information,  
to be installed on the computer.

10. (Amended) A method comprising:

receiving information about a prospective user of an operating system;

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developing an operating system image, pre-populated with the information,  
to be installed on a computer;

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wherein the receiving comprises obtaining the information from another  
computer used by a consumer to order the computer with the operating system;  
and

wherein the obtaining comprises accessing a bill of materials corresponding  
to the other computer.

15. (Amended) A method comprising:

receiving information about a prospective user of an operating system;

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developing the operating system image, pre-populated with the information,  
to be installed on a computer;

wherein the operating system is organized as a plurality of components, and  
wherein one of the plurality of components is an identity component that includes  
the information; and

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wherein the identity component is accessible to other application programs to allow the other application programs to be customized based at least in part on the information.

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17. (Amended) A method comprising:

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receiving information regarding an intended user of a computer, wherein the information includes user preferences for multiple different pieces of hardware of the computer; and

automatically customizing an operating system installed on the computer based at least in part on the received information.

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26. (Amended) A method comprising:

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accessing a record of user information describing a user, the record being available to a plurality of programs, the record including both information describing the user and data describing hardware preferences of the user; and

customizing one of the plurality of programs based at least in part on the user information by integrating the information describing the user and the data describing hardware preferences of the user from the record into the one of the plurality of programs.

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34. (Amended) One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including:

accessing a record of user information describing a user, wherein the record includes both information describing the user and data describing hardware preferences of the user; and

automatically customizing an operating system installed on the computer based on the user information by integrating the information describing the user and the data describing hardware preferences of the user from the record into the operating system.

41. (Amended) A system comprising:

a plurality of programs;

a record of user information describing a user, wherein the record includes user preferences for multiple different pieces of hardware of the system; and

an interface communicatively coupled to at least one of the plurality of programs and the record of user information, wherein the interface is configured to receive information requests from the at least one program and obtain the requested information from the record of user information.

47. (New) One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by one or more processors of a computer, causes the one or more processors to:

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obtain, over a network when the computer is initially booted, a record of user information describing a user; and

automatically customize an operating system installed on the computer based on the obtained user information.

48. (New) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 47, wherein the network comprises the Internet.

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